

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA  
SOUTH BEND DIVISION

ALVIN CHRISTMAS,

Petitioner,

v.

CAUSE NO. 3:20-CV-587-JD-MGG

WARDEN,

Respondent.

OPINION AND ORDER

Alvin Christmas, a prisoner without a lawyer, filed a habeas corpus petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 to challenge his conviction of murder and robbery under Case No. 20C01-201-MR-7. Following a trial, on December 26, 2002, the Elkhart Circuit Court sentenced him as a habitual offender to one hundred forty-five years of incarceration. *Christmas v. State*, 2009 WL 4927874, at \*2 (Ind. App. 2009). Pursuant to Section 2254 Habeas Corpus Rule 4, the court must dismiss the petition “[i]f it plainly appears from the petition and any attached exhibits that the petitioner is not entitled to relief in the district court.”

The statute of limitations for habeas corpus cases is set forth in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d), which provides:

(1) A 1-year period of limitation shall apply to an application for a writ of habeas corpus by a person in custody pursuant to the judgment of a State court. The limitation period shall run from the latest of--

(A) the date on which the judgment became final by the conclusion of direct review or the expiration of the time for seeking such review;

(B) the date on which the impediment to filing an application created by State action in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States is removed, if the applicant was prevented from filing by such State action;

(C) the date on which the constitutional right asserted was initially recognized by the Supreme Court, if the right has been newly recognized by the Supreme Court and made retroactively applicable to cases on collateral review; or

(D) the date on which the factual predicate of the claim or claims presented could have been discovered through the exercise of due diligence.

(2) The time during which a properly filed application for State post-conviction or other collateral review with respect to the pertinent judgment or claim is pending shall not be counted toward any period of limitation under this subsection.

On direct appeal, the Indiana Supreme Court denied Christmas' petition to transfer on February 18, 2004. Therefore, his conviction became final for purposes of 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1)(A) when the time for petitioning the Supreme Court of the United States for a writ of certiorari expired on May 18, 2004. *See* U.S. Sup. Ct. R. 13(1) (petition for writs of certiorari must filed within 90 days after entry of judgment); *Jimenez v. Quarterman*, 555 U.S. 113, 119 (2009) (when a state prisoner does not petition the Supreme Court of the United States on direct appeal, his conviction becomes final when the time for filing a petition expires). The federal limitations period was tolled during the pendency of post-conviction proceedings from April 26, 2004, when Christmas filed his petition in the Elkhart Circuit Court to May 20, 2010, when the Indiana Supreme Court denied his petition for transfer. The federal limitations period expired one year later on May 20, 2011. Though Christmas made additional efforts to obtain post-

conviction relief in State court thereafter, these efforts did not restart the federal limitations period, nor did they “open a new window for federal collateral review.” *De Jesus v. Acevedo*, 567 F.3d 941, 943 (7th Cir. 2009); *see also Martinez v. Jones*, 556 F.3d 637, 638–39 (7th Cir. 2009) (“[T]he second petition tolls the limitations period only if the state court grants permission to file it.”). As a result, when Christmas filed this habeas petition in July 2020, he was more than nine years too late. Therefore, the court denies the habeas petition as untimely.

Pursuant to Section 2254 Habeas Corpus Rule 11, the court must consider whether to grant or deny a certificate of appealability. To obtain a certificate of appealability when a petition is dismissed on procedural grounds, the petitioner must show that reasonable jurists would find it debatable (1) whether the court was correct in its procedural ruling and (2) whether the petition states a valid claim for denial of a constitutional right. *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000). Here, there is no basis for finding that reasonable jurists would debate the correctness of this procedural ruling. Therefore, there is no basis for encouraging Christmas to proceed further, and a certificate of appealability is denied.

For these reasons, the court:

- (1) DISMISSES the habeas petition (ECF 1) because it is untimely;
- (2) DENIES Alvin Christmas a certificate of appealability pursuant to Section 2254 Habeas Corpus Rule 11; and
- (3) DIRECTS the clerk to close this case.

SO ORDERED on November 20, 2020

/s/JON E. DEGUILIO  
CHIEF JUDGE  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT